

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of operating a database that has plural records, the method including receiving queries, each including an identifier, and replying to said queries by reference to information from database records associated with said identifiers, said identifiers
5 being drawn from a universe of possible identifiers, a majority of which do not have active database records associated therewith, the method including:

receiving a query from a user including an identifier that has no active database record associated therewith, said identifier being derived from an existing media content object; and

- 10 permitting the user to create an active database record corresponding to said identifier.

2. The method of claim 1 that includes allowing the user to pay a fee, said fee entitling the user to specify at least a portion of the database record corresponding to said
15 identifier.

3. The method of claim 1 that includes allowing the user to make a first bid in an auction, said auction continuing for a predetermined period commencing with said first bid.

- 20 4. A method comprising:
deriving an identifier corresponding to an existing media content object;
querying a database with the derived identifier; and
if the database has no active record corresponding to said derived identifier,
25 permitting a party who first queried the database with said identifier to define such a record.

5. The method of claim 4 in which the media content object is an audio file.

6. The method of claim 4 in which the media content object is an MP3 audio file.

7. The method of claim 4 in which the media content object is a video file.

5 8. The method of claim 4 in which the deriving includes consulting a resource external of the media content object.

9. The method of claim 8 in which the resource is a database.

10 10. The method of claim 4 in which the deriving includes processing data from the media content object to obtain said identifier.

11. The method of claim 4 in which several identifiers can correspond to the same media content object.

15 12. The method of claim 11 in which the identifiers are automatically generated from different releases of an audio CD, wherein the releases have different audio and/or table of contents.

20 13. The method of claim 11 in which the identifiers are automatically generated from different versions of an MP3 file, wherein the versions have different bits due to the compression and/or bit-rate.

25 14. A method of managing a universe of identifiers, some of said identifiers being active and having internet resources associated therewith, and others of said identifiers being inactive, the method including receiving a query corresponding to an inactive identifier and, in response, initiating an auction, a winner of said auction being granted the privilege of associating an internet resource with said identifier for at least a predetermined time period.

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15. The method of claim 14 in which said active identifiers correspond to different audio content, and the internet resources corresponding to said active identifiers correspond to said audio content.

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16. A method comprising:
 auctioning to the highest bidder the privilege of defining a link that is to be associated, for a predetermined time period, with an identifier through a database; and
 at the expiry of said predetermined time period, re-auctioning said privilege.

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17. The method of claim 16 in which the proceeds of said re-auctioning are shared with the high bidder of a previous auction for said privilege.

18. The method of claim 16 in which the identifier corresponds to an existing
15 media content object.

19. The method of claim 18 in which the identifier is derived, rather than assigned.

add #4